

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society



Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 8, 2007

Location: Louise Lowry Davis  
Recreation Center  
1232 De La Vina (at Victoria)

Meeting: 7:30 PM

## **Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids will speak about Catasetinae Species and Their Cultivation**

This month's talk is a visit to the weird and wild side of the orchid world, with members of the Catasetinae. Fred Clarke, an award-winning grower and hybridizer of these orchids, will present a widescreen computer slide show on some of some excellent species of Catasetum, Cynoches and Mormodes. Fred has been growing orchids for 30 years and hybridizing for 22 years. His nursery, Sunset Valley Orchids, features hybrids of these interesting orchids, plus paphiopedilums, cattleyas, bulbophyllums, and other assorted orchids. He is also an AOS judge.

## **Calendar of Events**

**August 12, 2007**

### **Annual OSSB Summer Picnic**

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate will once again host us for our summer social event. Meet at 3 PM at SBOE for the potluck picnic. Come an hour early to tour SBOE.

**September 8-9, 2007**

### **Orchids at the Village Show and Sale**

10 AM-6 PM, South Coast Plaza Village, Sunflower and Bear Streets, Santa Ana. Free parking and admission. For more info, go to [www.ocorchidshow.com](http://www.ocorchidshow.com)

**September 22, 2007**

### **Coastal Valley Orchid Society's Orchid Expo and Sale "Orchids: Nature's Masterpieces"**

10 AM-4 PM, Lompoc Public Library. AOS judging at 1 PM is open to the public. Potting and mounting demos at 11 AM and 2 PM. Free admission. [www.coastalvalleyorchidsociety.com](http://www.coastalvalleyorchidsociety.com)

## **Looking ahead...**

**February 29-March 2, 2008**

### **63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Santa Barbara International Orchid Show**

Note the early date of next year's show!

## **Announcements**

❁ Thanks go to Bryce Augustine, who donated sixteen large phragmipediums to the July raffle table.

❁ Have an orchid photo you'd like to share? Email it to me at [orchidtrain@cox.net](mailto:orchidtrain@cox.net) and I'll put it into a future issue of the newsletter.

OSSB Officers for 2007:

President - Don Brown

Treasurer - Angela Watt

Vice President - Carole Thompson

Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

[www.orchidsb.net](http://www.orchidsb.net)

## Summary of the July 2007 Meeting

✿ President Don Brown welcomed visitors and thanked Sandy Svoboda for bringing the July refreshments. The OSSB refreshment sign-up sheet is full through November. Thanks to those who have signed up!

August	P. J. Sanderson
September	Ed and Shirly Carter
October	Bryce and Nancy Augustine
November	Laura Dewey

✿ President Don Brown reminded members of the upcoming OSSB potluck picnic. The picnic will feature an auction of plants donated by members. This is a fundraiser for the society, so bring in your divisions to donate and bid generously.

✿ Gene Baum told members that the Coastal Valley Orchid Society in Lompoc is looking to repeat its successful judging Expo from last year. There will be vendors present at this year's Expo. CVOS is also soliciting plants for display.

### Program

Vice President Carole Thompson introduced our July speaker, Brazilian orchid expert Francisco Miranda. He is recognized as a taxonomic authority on Brazilian orchids by the American Orchid Society, and his nursery specializes in Brazilian orchids. Francisco spoke to the members on the genus *Cattleya* in Brazil.

He began with an overview of the climate of South America, Cold fronts in the southern hemisphere originate from Antarctica but pass over a huge mass of water, so similar latitudes are milder in South America as compared to North America. This explains in part why there are some 15,000 orchid species. Brazil itself is a little larger than the continental US (minus Alaska), but has a wider range of latitudes, from equatorial regions of the Amazon to cool climates fairly far south.

Central Brazil is very dry, going up to 9 months without rain. Moisture from the Amazon is prevented from reaching central Brazil by the table lands. On the other side, 80% of the rain from cold fronts is released along the coastal mountains.

While most of us think of the Amazon region as lush, this very uniform climate is rich in tree species, but not in orchid species. Only three species of cattleyas can be found here (five if one includes those in the neighboring Venezuelan Amazon), compared to around 2000 species of trees. Francisco noted that only some 300 orchid species in general are found in this region, adding that South American species found below elevations of 200 feet number only 350.

Outside of the Amazon, Brazil also has deciduous forests that lose their leaves during the dry season. Slightly less dry are the semi-deciduous forests, and here can be found five of Brazil's cattleya species. The northeast interior region is very dry and hosts only two cattleya species, these in favorable microclimates.

The coastal forest of Brazil is more favorable for orchids in general, with over 2000 of Brazil's species found there, and 18 species of cattleyas. These regions have high humidity. Mountains provide variation in elevation and different light exposures.

Francisco noted that regions with more climate variation promote speciation, which is why the uniform climate of the Amazon has fewer orchids than the more varied climate of the coastal forest.

Cattleyas are divided into three groups. Unifoliate cattleyas usually have one leaf per pseudobulb. There are no rings on the pseudobulbs and the flower sheaths are well developed. Bifoliate cattleyas have long, pencil-like pseudobulbs with rings on the bulb. Usually, there are two leaves, but particularly healthy plants can have three or even four leaves per pseudobulb. Bifoliate cattleyas range in height from four inches to six feet. The "other" group often has elliptical, fat pseudobulbs, like *C. nobilior* or *C. walkeriana*. However, the former has two leaves and the latter one leaf.

*C. nobilior* comes from a region of very dry conditions. Plants produce a growth with bulb and leaf, then a separate growth with the flower. During the rainy season, *C. nobilior* will engage in heavy growth; then in spring, before the rain, it will make a flower. Sometimes, if the plant sets a pod, it will grow the pod the next season rather than a regular growth. Francisco noted that he has seen plants with up to five spikes without growth. This species survives by its very long roots, up to 30 feet.

Among the bifoliate group, *C. amethystoglossa* is easy to identify. Flowers are usually spotted magenta on rose and appear up to twenty on a spike. Plants are up to two and a half feet and do not tolerate temperatures below the high 30s. Plants are found in a semi-deciduous habitat. Unfortunately, these areas are being cut for agriculture. The shallow soil works for only a few years, but when the farmers move on, the forest does not regenerate and is instead replaced by grassland.

*C. guttata* is a bifoliate type that varies in color from greenish to brownish to pinkish. The very fragrant flowers appear up to fifty per spray and may exhibit some slight spotting. Pseudobulbs grow to six feet and are used as outdoor garden plants by Brazilians. The species grows naturally on the beach in open, shrubby forest, often up to 10 or 20 feet into the trees.

The similar *C. leopoldii* from Southern Brazil never produces fifty flowers on a head. The very fragrant flowers are larger than those of *C. guttata* and exhibit less color variation. Flowers are usually dark magenta with a fuchsia lip that is wider than that of *C. guttata*. Now beginning to appear in cultivation is a form with a white lip and green petals and sepals with a few rusty-colored spots. The coerulea form has a bluish lip on a green flower. A peloric form puts the fuchsia of the lip onto the petals. This species is found on big fig trees in the city (well shaded) or on open trees in full sun, and is very common. It can be found on Santa Catarina Island in the second to most southern Brazilian state and in the city of Sao Paulo. In southern Brazil, summers can reach over 100°F, while winter nights can drop close to freezing.

Comparing these two, often confused species is useful.

<i>C. guttata</i>		<i>C. leopoldii</i>
	different fragrances	
downward-facing lip		front of labellum visible
small lip		wider lip
	different geography	

different bloom season

*C. forbesii* is one of the best of the showy bifoliate and is easy to grow. Flowers are pale tan-green with white lips that have bright red stripes and yellow interior. Again, plants can be found naturalized in Rio de Janeiro. Francisco noted that making plants extinct is more certain by habitat destruction. Plants that are overcollected often come back given a few generations.

*C. harrisoniana* is not often seen in the US and is therefore often misidentified. Plants have a characteristic, slightly three-lobed lip, with the margins of the lip turned slightly back and a bright yellow spot on the lip. It comes in different color forms, including white, a regular fuchsia form, and a peloric fuchsia form. Flowers are to four inches across but with not much substance. In nature, they are found very high on trees.

The similar *C. loddigesii* sometimes has spots. The lip and column face downward, while *C. harrisoniana*'s lip faces to the front. The lip has no stripes or yellow area. Francisco showed several photos taken from the roadside of plants up to 100 feet up in very large trees. Comparing this species and its look-alike is also useful.

<i>C. harrisoniana</i>	<i>C. loddigesii</i>
winter bloom	summer bloom
different fragrances	
cooler grower	sea level heat
second mountain range	swamp inhabitant
from the coast	
trilobed lip	not trilobed
yellow keels in lip	no yellow
sides of lip flare back	
forward facing lip	downward facing lip

A dwarf relative of *C. harrisoniana* is *C. kerrii*. This rare species has a similar color but different lip shape, though the yellow keel does appear. Flowers are not as full.

*C. intermedia* is a species with lots of color variation, including light pink, pink and coerulea. One peloric form, known as *aquinii*, found some hundred years ago had a powerful impact on future breeding of splash-petaled hybrids. The *orlata* form of the species has color all the way around the lip. The species is found predominantly in southern Brazil, including in swampy areas where it grows near the top of the vegetation. Some can be found on the beach in Rio de Janeiro in short scrub growing in sand, or on Santa Catarina Island on the beach. Plants are hard to pot because rhizomes naturally grow upward to escape sand drifts. Sometimes they are difficult to collect because they grow on cactus (ouch!). Plants will produce three to four growths a year. Note that Santa Catarina Island is only 20 miles long but boasts just under 300 orchid species.

The very constant species *C. violacea* has a wide distribution. The very fragrant flowers are four to four and a half inches on a six inch plant. The lip will have a yellow spot and magenta on the edge. There is an alba form. Getting to this plant in its Amazon home is an adventure. In any given year, water levels between rainy and dry season change by 30 feet, with 50 feet as extremes. To get to plants, one must climb the trees. But there one encounters amazing insects, and to escape from the troublesome kind, the only option is to jump back into the water. Most important is not to land on

the boat, because the boat is the survival of the whole party!

*C. granulosa* has six inch flowers with a spade-shaped lip. Colors are yellow to green to reddish-brown. Very similar is *C. schofieldiana*, which differs in its geography and slightly in its pattern of color. *C. porphyroglossa* has flowers of tan with a purple lip that are two and a half to three inches across.

*C. bicolor* has several large populations whose plants differ from each other. The coastal form is a dark mahogany with a small fuchsia lip. The interior form has a spade-shaped lip that is often twisted. The form *Brasiliensis* has a two inch wide lip but narrow petals and sepals, and also comes in a coerulea coloring, the form *rossii* is hot pink-red. Francisco speculated that this may be a natural hybrid with *C. walkeriana*. Tall forms tend to come from the coast. The form *grassii* has a fatter pseudobulb and flowers that are purple-violet.

From a very dry region comes *C. elongata*, a two foot plant with a two foot spike. It inhabits a region with succulents, euphorbias and cactus and is found growing on granite rocks. It is difficult in cultivation. The related *C. tenuis* has long pseudobulbs and a four to five inch greenish flower with a white lip.

Plants of *C. aelandiae* are often not long-lived in cultivation. Like many bifoliate, they are intolerant of mistakes and are prone to mealybug and scale, which suck the vitality out of the pseudobulbs. This species has green flowers with rusty spots and a white lip. The striking coerulea form has brown spots on green with a blue lip.

The pretty *C. schilleriana* has a stripe on the lip. The "ugly" unifoliate *C. dormaniana* has starry muddy-green flowers with a fuchsia lip. Much prettier is *C. eldorado*, found in open forest in the Amazon. This type of forest comprises only 1% of the Amazon and has 70% of Amazonian orchids. Here, the soil is sandy, rather than overlaid with silt clay washed from the Andes. The white sand soil drains rapidly and will be very dry after a mere three or four days without rain. The resultant forest is very open, like a beach forest, and admits more light. Flowers of the species are seven inch white with color lips of pink or fuchsia.

Also large is the type species for the genus, *C. labiata*. These seven inch flowers exhibit color variation including semi-alba, light pink, coerulea, white, and the normal pink-magenta with darker lip. Plants are found on exposed rock in full sun with constant breezes. The similar *C. warneri* can be differentiated by fragrance and bloom season.

*C. nobilior* has side lobes covering the column, lots of stripes, and a lip pointing to the front. Flowers can be very round. Plants are found in very dry regions in a narrow valley between tablelands, where trees are mostly leafless. Confusion with the similar *C. walkeriana* has led to some hybrids or misnamed species, including the vigorous alba form of "walkeriana", *C. walkeriana* 'Streeter's Choice', and *C. walkeriana pendente*. *C. walkeriana* has small side lobes that do not cover the lip and a narrow isthmus on the lip. The lip and column point downward, almost in the plane of the petals and sepals.

Some of this very interesting taxonomic information is available at [www.mirandaorchids.com](http://www.mirandaorchids.com).

## OSSB Summer Picnic at SBOE

Sunday, August 12, 2007  
at the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate  
3 PM

Our summer social event is held in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society. Bring plants to donate to the Silent Auction (one of our fundraisers!) and designate which society gets the profits. Last year, your editor picked up some very nice plants on the auction table; I can personally recommend bringing your money to bid on the auction plants.

Don't forget to bring your own drinks, plates, utensils and picnic

blanket. Plan to sit on the ground, or bring folding tables and chairs. Continuing in our potluck tradition, bring a dish serving six to ten people. Here's what to bring, according to the first letter of your last name.

- ✿ A—I: salad or side dish
- ✿ J—Q: dessert
- ✿ R—Z: main course

Thanks to the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate for generously offering their picnic area.

### Cover Photo

This month's cover photo features *Vanda* Black Beauty, a large-flowered purple vanda grown by Phil Rietz. It is a cross of *Vanda* Chindavat and *Vanda* Kasem's Delight. This is a complex hybrid, but with only four species in its background: *Vanda sanderiana*, *Vanda coerulea*, *Vanda tricolor* and *Vanda luzonica*. These are combined for up to six generations of hybrids, resulting in this fine, round-flowered plant that will bloom two or more times a year, with flowers lasting up to a month. Vandas like lots of fertilizer and high humidity. Phil grows this plant warm and bright in his greenhouse, watering every other day.

### July Show Table Results

Don Brown made a big splash on the July Show Table. First place went to his plant of *Epi.* Standard Setter, a nice specimen with lots of spikes. Also a Don Brown specimen was one of three plants that tied for second place: a white, very floriferous *Mystacidium capense* grown outdoors. Don tied himself for second place with his showy *Disa uniflora*, grown with clean water. Also tying for second place was James Merriman's *Enc. adenicaule* (formerly *Enc. nemorale*). Don also tied for third place with *Eplc.* Pixie Charm, another big plant with lots of spikes. Carole Thompson's huge-flowered *Paph. lowii* was the other third place plant. Thanks also to Chris and Laurel Clayton and Jeff Thompson for bringing in plants to show. And thanks to Paul Gripp and Bryce Augustine for their show table description.